

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE

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FOR THE AM0ASSADOR FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC (GROVE, THOMAS ARTHUR), NP

SUBJECT: THOMAS GROVE CASE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER HAND-DELIVERED TO THE PRESIDENT BY REV. ARTHUR GROVE, FATHER OF MISSING TREKKER THOMAS GROVE. QUOTE DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: MAY I PLEASE TELL THE TRAGIC STORY OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF OUR SON, THOMAS, UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES IN NEPAL, DECEMBER 1975, IN A BRIEF OUTLINE FORM.

TOM SERVED WITH THE PEACE CORPS IN AFGHANISTAN (OPERATION HUNGER) WHERE HE RECEIVED THE HIGHEST COMMENDATIONS FOR THE WORK HE ACCOMPLISHED THERE.

AFTER THE COMPLETION OF HIS ASSIGNMENT, HE WENT TO PERTH,
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AUSTRALIA WHERE HE WORKED FOR AMEX IN FIELD EXPLORATIONS

DOING GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS IN THE OUTBACK. HIS CHIEF PURPOSE WAS TO GAIN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN GEOLOGICAL WORK AND TO EARN SOME EXTRA MONEY TO TRAVEL IN PARTS OF ASIA ON HIS WAY HOME TO THE WEST COAST, U.S.A.

HE VISITED NEPAL AND BEGAN HIS TREK TO THE BASE OF MT. EVEREST IN DEC. 10, 1975. (SEE ATTACHED NEWSPAPER ARTICLE MAR. 10, 1976.) HE PLANNED TO RETURN TO KATHMANDU IN THIRTY

DAYS (ABOUT JAN. 10, 1976.)

WHEN WE DID NOT HEAR FROM HIM AT THE END OF THIRTY DAYS, WE BEGUN ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE TO SEARCH THE TRAIL FROM KATHMANDU TO THE BASE OF EVEREST. IT WAS MOST DIFFICULT TO GET HELP AND TO MAKE THE AUTHORITIES REALIZE THAT TOM HAD ENCOUNTERED TROUBLE ALONG THE WAY AND NEEDED HELP IMMEDIATELY.

EARLY IN MARCH 1976, A PACKET CONTAINING HIS PASSPORT, AIR-PLANE TICKETS TO THE WEST COAST, U.S.A. (HE WAS ON HIS WAY HOME) AND OTHER PAPERS WERE TURNED IN TO THE U.S. EMBASSY AT KATHMANDU. THE PACKET WAS FOUND ALONG THE TRAIL IN THE DOLAKHA DISTRICT OF NEPAL.

AFTER 3 1/2 OR 4 MONTHS WE WERE ABLE TO ENLIST THE SERVICES OF PEACE CORPS MEMBERS TO BEGIN SEARCHING THE TRAILS AND VILLAGES WHERE HIS PAPERS WERE FOUND, AND LATER ANOTHER SEARCH PARTY WENT TO THE UPPER REGIONS.

WHEN TOM LEFT AUSTRALIA HE PURCHASED ENOUGH AMERICAN EXPRESS TRAVELERS CHECKS FOR HIS TRIP HOME. HE MAILED US THE SERIAL NUMBERS, ETC. OF THESE CHECKS. THIS INFORMATION WAS GIVEN TO THE U.S. EMBASSY AND THE POLICE AT KATHMANDU IN MARCH 1976. A NUMBER OF THESE FORGED CHECKS WERE CASHED AT THE KATHMANDU AIRPORT APRIL 30 AND MAY 1, 1976. YET WE WERE GIVEN THE ASSURANCE THAT THE BANK OF NEPAL AND THE POLICE WERE CHECKING CLOSELY ON THIS MATTER. THE POLICE HELD TWO SUSPECTS, BUT RELEASED THEM SOMETIME IN APRIL, 1976.

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THE SEARCH PARTY, THAT RETURNED LATE IN JUNE 1976, DISCOVERED THAT THE ONE SUSPECT, SUNWAR, HAD BEEN A THIEF AND TROUBLE MAKER IN HIS HOME VILLAGE OF JIRI AND HAD IN HIS POSSESSION SEVERAL ITEMS OFTEN CARRIED BY WESTERNERS WHILE TREKKING. THE POLICE HAVE PROMISED TO QUESTION HIM AGAIN.

IT APPEARS, FROM ALL REPORTS, THAT TOM WAS ATTACKED, BEATEN, ROBBED AND KILLED SOMETIME IN LATE DECEMBER 1975, AND HIS

BODY HIDDEN ALONG THE TRAIL.

WE HAVE HAD THE PROMISE THAT THE POLICE WOULD MAKE AN EFFORT TO SEE WHO IS CASHING HIS FORGED TRAVELERS CHECKS AND TO TRY AND APPREHEND THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CRIME.

I DEEPLY FEEL THAT A WORD FROM YOU AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, OR FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DIRECTED TO THE HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL, ENCOURAGING THEM TO MAKE AN "ALL OUT EFFORT" TO FIND SUNWAR AND OTHER

SUSPECTS, WOULD SOLVE THE MYSTERY AND LEAD TO THE ARREST OF THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ROBBERY AND DISAPPEARANCE OF OUR SON. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT OTHERS WERE ROBBED AND BEATEN IN THE SAME DISTRICT, ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS OUR SON WAS ATTACKED.

WE HAVE BEEN LIVING IN A PERIOD OF EMOTIONAL STRESS AND ANXIETY FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS. TOM WAS A RESPONSIBLE PERSON, SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS, HE SERVED HIS COUNTRY WELL IN THE PEACE CORPS AND THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS TO SEE THAT THE CRIMINALS ARE APPREHENDED AND HIS BODY RETURNED AND PLACED AT REST WITH A SENSE OF REVERENCE AND DIGNITY.

I CALL UPON YOU, AS OTHER PARENTS LONG AGO, CALLED UPON ANOTHER GREAT REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, TO GIVE US YOUR HELP AND TO USE YOUR INFLUENCE TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL TO GIVE THEIR WHOLE-HEARTED COOPERATION IN THIS MATTER.

GOD'S SPEED TO YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES AND SUCCESS IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DAYS WHICH LIE AHEAD. MAY I EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO YOU FOR ANY HELP YOU CAN GIVE AND FOR MAKING AN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL TO CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION OF OUR SON'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE. UNQUOTE.

2. AS A RESPONSE TO THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN REV. GROVE'S LETTER, YOU SHOULD MAKE ONE MORE EFFORT WITH THE NEPALESE AT THE HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL AND IN THE NAME OF THE SECRETARY, REQUESTING INTENSIFICATION OF THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THOMAS GROVE AND ON ANY PERSONS SUSPECTED OF HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN HIS DISAPPEARANCE. IF YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH THE KING HAS NOT YET OCCURRED, YOU MAY CONSIDER INCLUDING THIS ITEM IN YOUR PRESENTATION TO HIS MAJESTY. IN DELIVERING THE REQUEST, YOU SHOULD EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR

NEPALESE EFFORTS TO DATE BUT URGE THAT ALL POSSIBLE EFFORTS
BE DEVOTED TO FOLLOWING UP REMAINING LEADS IN THE CASE, IN
ORDER TO END THE ANGUISH OF UNCERTAINTY FOR THE GROVE
FAMILY AND BRING THE CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE.

3. WE WILL MAKE ABOVE POINTS TO AMBASSADOR KHATRI HERE AS
WELL. INSTRUCTION FOR FURTHER APPROACH TO NEPALESE SHOULD NOT
BE REGARDED IN ANY WAY AS CRITICAL OF EMBASSY'S HANDLING
OF GROVE WHICH WE BELIEVE HAS BEEN EXEMPLARY. HABIB

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